

2018 VCE Chinese Second Language Advanced written examination report

General comments

The majority of students were adequately prepared for the 2018 VCE Chinese Second Language Advanced examination. Only a small number of students did not respond to either the translation or the written task. Most students seemed to understand the requirements of each task; however, students who paid attention to specific information were able to address the tasks fully and therefore performed better than those who did not pay attention to detail.

Areas of strength included responding to questions in Chinese in both listening and reading tasks and in Section C – Writing in Chinese. When responding to questions in English, not only were the students required to comprehend the texts in Chinese but also convey their understanding in English.

Specific information

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

Section 1 – Listening and responding

In this section, students listened to two texts and were required to create responses to demonstrate their ability to grasp the main ideas, interpret the information and extract relevant details. For example, in Text 2 the focus of the question was not on what Xiao Wen's results in the sports event were, but the reasons for her happiness. Therefore, it was not enough to justify her happiness by only mentioning that she came second in the long jump without emphasising that her result this year was better than last year.

Apart from improving their analytical skills, students are also encouraged to practise listening for detail. Most students performed well in Part B. In this section, students needed to write in characters and in full sentences. Common character mistakes in the students' responses were: 圣诞节, 休息, 度假 and 觉得.

Part A – Answer in English

Text 1

Question 1

By celebrating the older brother's 21st birthday at home with a feast (or eat fish, beef and fruit) and flowers

Text 2

Question 2

- She came first in the 50-metre sprint and second in the 100-metre sprint (both parts were required).
- She came second in the long jump and her result was better than in the previous year/she jumped half a metre further than last year (both parts were required).
- Her team won the 100-metre relay.

Part B – Answer in Chinese

The assessment criteria for this part were:

- the capacity to understand general and specific aspects of texts
- the capacity to convey information accurately and appropriately.

Text 3

Question 3

- 玛丽一家人今年假期去了加拿大旅游，度过了一个白色的圣诞节。(This year Mary's family travelled to Canada where they had a white Christmas.)
- 小明假期不能出去玩。(Xiao Ming could not go out to have fun this holiday.)
- 妈妈给他请了好几门课/科目的家教，他每天有做不完的作业。(His mother got him tutors for quite a few subjects. He had endless homework to do every day.)

Both parts of points 1 and 3 were required for a full mark.

Section 2 – Reading, responding and translating

Part A – Answer in English

In this section, students read one text and responded to questions in English. Most students achieved well, demonstrating a sound understanding of the overall meaning of the text, as well as the ability to identify specific points. When responding to questions in English, although students were not required to write in full sentences, they must make sure that the information is clearly conveyed. For example, in Question 4a., just saying 'less likely to be late' was not clear if it referred to the writer who was less likely to be late to catch the train or if the train was not late very often. Students must ensure that their responses are accurate.

Text 4

Question 4a.

- Trains are fast.
- Trains are less crowded.
- Trains are quite comfortable.
- Trains are on time.
- The writer travels with friends.

Question 4b.

People who:

- are relaxed/easy and natural/poised
- enjoyed the scenery along the way

- always look around and worry a lot about the train
- don't like people sitting next to them and can't relax at all.

Question 4c.

- He is a happy person.
- He nods at people he knows.
- He listens to music and uses his phone.
- He talks and laughs with friends.
- He doesn't care if he has a seat or not.

Part B – Answer in Chinese

In this section students were awarded marks for comprehension, for their capacity to convey information in Chinese and for their use of the Chinese language. Students were required to interpret information provided in a table and convey their understanding in their own words to address the questions. Most students were able to identify relevant points effectively and produce clear and logical responses. Again, students are reminded to pay attention to detail when reading the texts as well as when writing their answers. A number of students simply said that Chinese language is interesting, 汉语有趣, without pointing out specifically that **speaking** Chinese is interesting, 说汉语有趣. In Question 5c., students were asked to identify people whose jobs in China would be different from their current jobs, but they also needed to justify their responses with reference to the table. Full marks were not awarded if students did not provide information on these peoples' current jobs as insufficient evidence was present to justify the change.

Text 5

Question 5a.

Any two of the following:

- 他们可以和中国朋友交流/说汉语 (can talk to Chinese friends/speak Chinese)
- 他们喜欢中国文化/喜欢中国音乐 (or 听和唱汉语歌)、书法和中国菜 (love Chinese culture/love Chinese music [or listen and sing Chinese songs], calligraphy and Chinese dishes)
- 他们可以/想在中国工作 (can/want to work in China)

Question 5b.

- 马丽和大为有相似的体会。(Mali and Dawei have similar experience.)
- 他们都认为说汉语很有趣, 可是学汉字不容易/有点难 (Both think that speaking is fun, but learning characters is hard.)

Question 5c.

- 马丽现在是一个服务员, 将来想当厨师。(Mali, a waitress, wants to become a chef.)
- 山本, 现在是商店店员, 将来想当经理。(Shanben, a shop assistant, wants to become a manager.)
- 爱美, 现在是空姐, 将来想开网店。(Aimei, a flight attendant, wants to do online sales.)

Students could be awarded some marks if they identified the correct people but did not provide any details.

Part C – Translation

In this section, students were required to translate two texts into English. Accurate translation was essential. It is important that the translation reads well overall. Some common mistranslations are listed below:

- 很少用 rarely use (not ‘not often use’)
- 扫一扫 scanning (not ‘sao yi sao’ in Pinyin)
- 二维码 QR code (not ‘2D’ or ‘barcode’, or ‘Er Wei’ in Pinyin)
- 不容易 not easy (not ‘uneasy’)
- 小一岁 one year younger (not ‘one year smaller’)

Question 6

In recent years, Chinese people rarely use cash to make payments, whether it be for shopping, eating at a restaurant or travelling. The most popular payment method is to scan, which means that the payment will be completed by simply scanning the QR code of the payee with a mobile phone. This new payment method is really fast and convenient, which is why Chinese people often say: ‘One can travel anywhere with just a mobile phone in hand’.

Question 7

Many interesting things happened over the New Year. A pair of twins was born one year apart. On New Year’s Eve, a mother went into labour at a hospital. The labour was not only slow but also very difficult as she was giving birth to a pair of twins. The older brother was born at 11.45 pm on 31 December 2017, but the younger brother was born at 12.15 am on 1 January 2018. Even though the younger brother was born only half an hour after his older brother, he was one year younger than him. Their mother realised that in the future, many people would ask her why the twins are one year apart.

Section 3 – Writing in Chinese

Students attempted a full range of the essay topics, with Questions 8, 10 and 11 being the most popular. Students who scored well demonstrated a clear understanding of their chosen task, provided the required information with in-depth elaboration, and handled complex grammatical structures well. However, students could improve their interpretation skills to ensure that they address the task fully. Once students have chosen a topic, they should read the question again to identify key words and ideas. For example, in Question 8 ‘the most – 最难忘的’ (memorable experience) should have been noted and highlighted in the development of the response. This year a significant number of students wrote in general terms about their experience as an exchange student without emphasising the ones that they were impressed by most. Students should practise responding to questions under examination conditions as part of their examination preparation. Students should plan their responses to make sure all elements of a question are answered and ensure they write a full essay. Students should also ensure that they have enough time to proofread their work.

Question 8

Text type: diary entry

Audience: oneself

Kind of writing: personal

Points/responses students could have included:

- Students were expected to reflect on their most memorable experience with their host family in Beijing. This could have included an interesting outing/short trip, watching a unique performance with the family such as the Peking Opera, an acrobatic show or a Chinese movie.
- Elements of personal language such as the use of first-person, subjective/informal/familiar style/register; emphasis on opinions, feelings and impressions rather than factual, objective information.
- The piece of writing should have been clearly recognisable as a diary entry through use of some of the following: date, structure, opening, content, conclusion, register, style, layout.

Question 9

Text type: (informal) letter

Audience: penpal

Kind of writing: informative

Points/responses students could have included:

- Students were expected to inform their penpal of ways in which Australia Day is celebrated in Australia. This could have included: the Australia Day parade, a picnic or BBQ, watching a sporting match, a visit to the Governor-General's residence.
- The letter needed to be informative: objective style, structure and sequence to make the message clear and unambiguous, use of facts and examples.
- The piece of writing needed to be clearly organised as a letter through the use of some of the following: date, structure, opening, conclusion, register, style, layout.

Question 10

Text type: article

Audience: readers of local newspaper

Kind of writing: evaluative

Points/responses students could have included:

- Students were expected to present appropriate advantages and disadvantages when taking a gap year before commencing tertiary education. Advantages could have included: having a break/adjusting/getting ready for tertiary education, having an enriching experience travelling overseas/becoming independent. Disadvantages could have included: graduating a year later than their peers/missing some opportunities, issues related with travelling overseas.
- As an evaluative piece of writing, students should have provided a logical presentation and discussion of ideas and expanded on important aspects of the issue.
- The piece of writing needed to be clearly recognised as an article through characteristics such as topic, structure (introduction, body, conclusion), content, title, author (fictional name), register, style, layout.

Question 11

Text type: script of a speech

Audience: students attending the assembly

Kind of writing: persuasive

Points/responses students could have included:

- In their responses students should have attempted to persuade their fellow students to participate in the celebrations of World Forest Day. They were expected to present convincing arguments such as gaining more awareness about environmental protection issues, making

new friends, getting some exercise. They could have also provided some details about the event.

- Elements of persuasive language should have been employed, such as appeals, emotive language, anecdotes, repetition, etc.
- The piece of writing needed to be clearly organised as a speech through the use of some of the following: title/topic, structure, opening, conclusion, register, style, layout.

Question 12

Text type: story

Audience: teenage readers of magazine

Kind of writing: imaginative

Points/responses students could have included:

- Students were expected to write an imaginative story about the first amazing adventure of the world's most powerful robot invented by them. The adventure described needed to be 'amazing' and the robot needed to be able to exhibit its most 'powerful' skills. The adventure could have involved saving mankind from a natural or manmade disaster.
- Elements of imaginative writing could have included the development of the plot and characters, descriptions of the setting, heightened drama.
- The piece of writing needed to be clearly organised as a story through characteristics such as title/topic, structure, content, author (fictional name), register, style, layout.